

Launching a Global Network of Virologists: The World Society for Virology (WSV)

Ahmed S. Abdel-Moneim^{1,2,3*¥}, Anupam Varma⁴, Flor H. Pujol⁵, George K. Lewis⁶, Janusz T. Paweska⁷, Jesús L. Romalde⁸, Maria Söderlund-Venermo⁹, Matthew D. Moore¹⁰, Michael M. Nevels^{11,12}, Vikram N. Vakharia¹³, Vinod Joshi¹⁴, Yashpal Singh Malik¹⁵, Zhengli Shi¹⁶, Ziad A. Memish^{17,18}

¹ Founder of the World Society for Virology

² Microbiology Department, College of Medicine, Taif University, Saudi Arabia

³ Virology Department, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Beni-Suef University, Egypt

⁴ Advanced Centre for Plant Virology, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, India

⁵ Laboratorio de Virología Molecular, Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas (IVIC), Caracas, Venezuela

⁶ Division of Vaccine Research, Institute of Human Virology, Maryland University, USA

⁷ Centre for Emerging Zoonotic and Parasitic Diseases, National Institute for Communicable Diseases, Johannesburg, South Africa

⁸ Departamento de Microbiología y Parasitología, CIBUS-Facultad de Biología, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

⁹ Virology Department, Helsinki University, Helsinki, Finland

¹⁰ Department of Food Science, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA

¹¹ Biomedical Sciences Research Complex, University of St Andrews, United Kingdom

¹² Institute for Medical Microbiology and Hygiene, University of Regensburg, Germany

¹³ Institute of Marine & Environmental Technology, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA

¹⁴ Amity University, Noida, India

¹⁵ Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India

¹⁶ Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases, Wuhan Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China

¹⁷ College of Medicine, Alfaisal University, Saudi Arabia

¹⁸ Research Department & Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Medicine, Prince Mohamed Bin Abdulaziz Hospital, Ministry of Health, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

¥ Authors are listed in alphabetic order

* Corresponding author:

Ahmed S. Abdel-Moneim

Email: info@ws-virology.org / asa@bsu.edu.eg / asa@tu.edu.sa

Telephone: +966-599-107-854

We are introducing the World Society for Virology (WSV). The WSV is the first global coalition of virologists, strongly supporting the One Health approach. The WSV's stated purpose is to help virologists by developing and improving collaboration, education, and guidance. WSV is committed to serve virologists worldwide by 1) connecting virologists working both in public and private sectors to enhance virology research and development, especially in low- and middle-income countries that often lack the required resources; 2) educating, communicating, and enhancing exchange of data on new developments and progress in virology research; 3) enhancing discovery and exchange of human, animal, plant, food and environmental samples around the globe for virus studies; and 4) promoting high quality virology research.

The concept of WSV was born out of ResearchGate, a social network that also connects scientists and scholars worldwide with little restriction. It should be stated emphatically that the intention of WSV is not to replace or duplicate the efforts of existing societies or professional networks. The premise of WSV is that the technology now exists to allow the establishment and maintenance of an international virology society without limitation of border, ethnicity, or resource. This idea has already attracted an increasing number of virologists and scientists in related fields to join WSV, with membership numbers steadily increasing over the course of six months and currently including people from more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, and North America.

WSV is currently in the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The only requirement to join the society is an interest in virology, public health and/or viral diseases and their management. There are currently four types of WSV memberships, all free-of-charge: i) honorary membership; ii) full membership; iii) corporate membership, and iv) early-stage membership (including students). All members have the right to vote in the elections of the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, executive board members, and receive equal access to all WSV resources. Three main functionary

committees exist to lead WSV: the Managing Committee, the Training and Career-Development Committee and the Membership Review Committee (www.ws-virology.org). WSV continues to accept new members to its different committees with the goal of having most of the world's countries or regions represented.

In order to encourage the collaboration of colleagues all over the world, WSV has sought and seeks partnerships with different virology and microbiology societies. WSV is currently partnered with the India Virological Society, Mexican Virology Networking, Colombian Association of Virology, Finnish Society for Study of Infectious Diseases, Societas Biochemical, Biophysica et Microbiologica Fenniae and Chinese Society for Virology - Division of the Chinese Society for Microbiology.

Overall, WSV is a global society for virologists. The explicit focus of WSV is promoting and enhancing virological science and education, with the broader goal to promote the welfare of humanity through reduced barriers to collaboration and information. The growing membership and interest of official partners from well-established national and international virology societies/organizations is a good indicator of the leap taken by the society. All virologists, from students to institution leaders, are invited to join this global network, as well as all virology societies are invited to become partners of WSV (www.ws-virology.org).